

The Joy of True Reciprocity

I have a deep longing that the true design of life be revealed on earth. I understand that there is a phasing out of the old, and a burgeoning of the new. It is a process that unfurls over time. Yet I have this increasingly relentless urge to let my life be used, wherever and whenever possible, to let some of this burgeoning have legs. True reciprocity, or gifting and re-gifting as I call it, is one of these most sublime possibilities.

The power of genuine gifting and re-gifting is visible at every level of life. For example, I love mangoes. I just ate one for lunch. This gorgeous fruit gave the whole of its intoxicatingly spicy sweet self to me. It started lunch as a mango. But by 1 pm, having become one with me, it began to experience life through Ellen-consciousness—presumably an increase for the fruit.

At another level, about 14 years ago, I met a most extraordinary elderly man who lived down the road. The simple presence of his being changed me. I was lifted again and again and again, by the power and consistency of his love. He gave that love freely to any and all who drew close. He loved unconditionally, tirelessly, and without a moment's thought as to whether his gift would be returned. His giving was true—no strings, no expectations, no demands. I was utterly blessed as I was drawn into oneness with the immensity of his love. I received to overflowing and was compelled to offer back anything and everything I could to him. I begged him and his wife to let me help clean their home, do the grocery shopping, weed the garden, rake the leaves—anything at all that would help make their way easier. Thank God they were willing to receive, because had I no avenue through which to give back, I'm certain I would have rotted or popped!

I recall working in their yard every morning for several months, before they and the rest of the world were awake. What occurred was stunningly unexpected. I was there to provide something for them, but as I raked, weeded, and cleaned, I found myself being lofted continuously into a state I can only describe as diaphanous fire—drawn up because of a complete surrender to the natural desire to return something. I know they were blessed by my giving, too, but I'm certain I received the lion's share. This illumined me, for all time, to the glory that shimmers in the wake of giving and receiving when it is genuine and unobligatory.

Unfortunately, for the most part, mankind seems to have forgotten this easy ecstasy. Every month I receive a bill from the electric company. They have taken it upon themselves to dictate, from pre-established parameters, my response to the gift of electricity they provide. I don't think. I don't feel. I just sign the check, and the lights continue to shine in my home. Now, don't get me wrong, I'm very thankful for my electricity, and for those who provide it. I am not demanding that they change their policies. But I must say that in all these years, I have not once

*Ellen Roos * Box 250 * Masonville, CO 80541*

*Passion Flower Music * ellen@passionflowermusic.com*

experienced being lifted into those sublime ranges of love because I signed that check. And from what I can tell, neither has the electric company.

Personally, it is repugnant to me to see people as dollar signs. So, one arena into which I can offer something closer to the truth is my own concerts. I love singing and sharing, without demanding that you pay a fixed ticket price up front—before you have even received. Instead, after the concert, on your way out, I invite you, as you feel moved, to take the moment to listen to that still, small, always-present, inner voice that is one with the organizing Source of all life, and perceive what is joyous and true for you to return. Whatever it is, I am deeply thankful! And I will use the re-gift to expand my ability to keep giving.

It is my heart's prayer that one day, this whole world will dance to the symphony of Love's gold, spun forth in the rhythms of giving and giving and giving again. May we all know that joy together.

Bless you, each one,

Ellen

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*Passion Flower Music * ellen@passionflowermusic.com*